



# NEWSLETTER

Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chair, Democratic Caucus

## Ridley-Thomas Spearheads Postcard Drive to Governor Regarding Sex Offenders

### Residents Demand Action to Limit Sex Offender Occupancy in Single Family Homes

South Los Angeles area residents led by Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas and the 48<sup>th</sup> Assembly District Empowerment Congress (ADEC) called on Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to order the California Department of Corrections (CDC) to halt placement of registered sex offenders on parole under the department's supervision in residential care facilities in excess of the legal limit for single family dwellings.

Constituents mailed over 1,100 postcards to the Governor demanding that the department, "immediately cease placement of multiple sex offenders in homes constructed to serve as single family dwellings."

The postcard effort echoed separate letters to the Governor sent by Assemblymember

Ridley-Thomas.

"Mr. Governor, in matters of public safety, especially those concerning our children, Californians expect swift and decisive action on the part of their elected representatives," wrote Ridley-Thomas. "Toward that end, I request your immediate intervention with the CDC."

Nearly three months ago Ridley-Thomas' district offices were contacted by concerned constituents regarding a "sober living" home in a 48th District neighborhood that housed 31 sex-offenders. These are persons required by law to register with local law enforcement authorities under Section 290 of the California Penal Code, and who are listed on the Megan's Law website to inform the community of their offenses and whereabouts. At the time, 17 of the registrants were placed there by the California Department of Corrections.

The home, located at 1932 W. Rochester Circle in South Los Angeles, lies within blocks of churches, an elementary school and a middle school, and is surrounded by families with children. Several of the sex offenders (a.k.a. PC 290 registrants) have been convicted of crimes involving lewd acts with children un-

der the age of 14.

"As disturbing as the Rochester situation is, I am equally concerned with recent reports which indicate that the placement of registered sex offenders in such significant numbers in a single residence, and in close proximity to schools, is a common practice of the CDC, particularly in the inner city," said Ridley-Thomas. When contacted by Ridley-Thomas, the department was unwilling to commit to changing its interpretation of the law.

ADEC members gathered the postcards from residents, family members, and caregivers, as well as senior advocates and others calling on the Governor to protect our children and neighborhoods.

Shortly after Rochester House neighbors and ADEC members began organizing, many of the parolees were transferred.

The 48<sup>th</sup> ADEC is a vehicle that engages and organizes the constituents of the district to address specific issues by influencing state policy, accessing state resources and working for the common good of its diverse neighborhoods.



## Stamp OUT The Overconcentration of Sex Offenders in Our Neighborhoods

May 19, 2005

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

A very critical issue that threatens the safety of women and children in our community requires your immediate intervention as Governor. I believe the Department of Corrections routinely places multiple sex-offenders (parolees under Department supervision required to register under section 290 of the State Penal Code) in local residences in direct violation of California Penal Code section 3003.5. The Code states that "a person released on parole...pursuant to Section 290...may not reside in any single family dwelling with any other person also required to register...".

As a citizen, I share responsibility for the safety of my community, neighbors, and family. I respectfully request that you, as Chief Executive of the state, order the Department of Corrections to immediately cease placement of multiple sex offenders in homes constructed to serve as single family dwellings. I look forward to your favorable response to this request within 30 days. Thank you.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_



# Ridley-Thomas Serves on Proposition 63 Mental Health Commission

Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas (D-Los Angeles) was recently appointed to the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MH-SOAC) by Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez (D-Los Angeles). The Commission was created under Proposition 63, known as the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), which authorized a 1 percent tax on income over \$1 million to pay for expanded health services for mentally ill children, adults, and seniors.

As one of sixteen members on the Commission and the only elected official from Southern California, Ridley-Thomas is charged with overseeing the disbursement of Proposition 63 funds. Estimates state that by FY 2006-07, the Mental Health Services Act will raise more than \$700 million annually. In order to receive funds, each county must develop a collaborative, community-driven process to determine priorities and submit a three-year plan to the Commission. The funding formula will be based mainly on pop-



Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas listens intently during a recent Select Committee Hearing on the Los Angeles Health Care Crisis, of which he is Chair.

ulation and need. "I am confident that as a member of the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission, Mark Ridley-Thomas will serve the people of California with the same dedication he has exhibited throughout his many past endeavors on behalf of his community and his constituents," Speaker Nunez said in announcing the appointment. A number of noted advocates for mental health issues applauded the Speaker's appointment. "Assemblymember Ridley-Thomas is a great advocate and has shown an ability to balance competing interests. I know he will provide leadership on this issue," said

Carol Schatz, President/CEO of the Central City Association of Los Angeles. Dr. Lynn Goodloe, Vice President of the Inglewood Chapter of the National Association for the Mentally Ill, agreed. "This is an excellent choice. Assemblymember Ridley-Thomas has been very supportive of our chapter and our focus on ensuring the availability of services in the African American community."

The 48<sup>th</sup> Assembly District includes portions of downtown Los Angeles that border the Central City area that includes high concentrations of homeless receiving services (a.k.a. "Skid Row"). That fact, when coupled with the strong linkage between homelessness and mental illness, magnifies the importance of the MHSA. "I look forward to continuing to serve our state and Los Angeles on an issue that has, until the passage of Proposition 63, been severely under-funded," said Ridley-Thomas. "Seven hundred million dollars per year should enable us to have a significant and lasting impact on mental health-related problems in California," he added.

The Commissioners were sworn in on Thursday, July 7, and begin their work in earnest this summer. You can follow the Commission's work in future AD-48 newsletters, or on the Department of Mental Health website at [www.dmh.ca.gov](http://www.dmh.ca.gov).

# Small Business Leader Honored

Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas (D-Los Angeles) honored the California Rehabilitation Employment Program (C-REP) as the Small Business of the Year in the 48<sup>th</sup> Assembly District at the California Small Business Association Luncheon in Sacramento, June 15<sup>th</sup>.

"While being in business for a year, C-REP has provided a bridge back into the community for ex-offenders in South Los Angeles," said Assemblymember Ridley-Thomas. "This business is operated successfully by David Glover with the highest standards of professionalism and integrity and empowering ex-offenders to help themselves."



Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas presents David Glover (center) with the 48<sup>th</sup> Assembly District Small Business of the Year Award. They are joined by Speaker Pro Tempore Leland Yee and Glover's wife, Donorah Glover.

According to a California Department of Corrections report, C-REP has had a higher rate of placement and job retention than any of their predecessors had in the past. C-REP's primary goal is to reduce recidivism rates significantly in Los Angeles and surrounding ar-

reas, in which statistics show that out of 400 parolees that entered their program, only 17 have actually gone back to prison.

"We care about our clients and sincerely want them to succeed," said Glover. "We have three goals: breaking their barriers, finding them full-time employment, and keeping them from returning to prison. The nexus is logical and mutually beneficial for both our business and ex-offender clients."

The awards luncheon was a part of a day-long event in which small business and government joined together in "A Salute to Small Business." Over 50 small businesses throughout California were recognized for their contributions to the state's economy. The event concluded with a dialogue between government agencies, small business liaisons and small business leaders.



# SEIU Walk & Run



Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas and 1968 Olympic Gold Medal winner Tommie Smith share a moment during the 5K Keep L.A. Running 2005 event at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum.



Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas and Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca rest after completing the 5K.



Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas presents KTLA icon Stan Chambers with a lifetime achievement award. They are joined by (l-r) County Supervisors Gloria Molina, Zev Yaroslavsky, and Yvonne B. Burke.